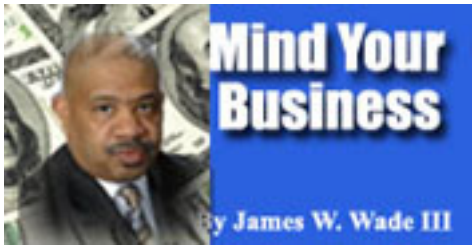

I am saddened to see another part of downtown close and hope that they will find other locations to open and continue to do business. We need both stores in the city to do well. It would not be the same getting a brim from Burlington as it was from a true hat store like the Mad Hatter.

A landmark store gone from downtown

In prior columns, I have written about my love for downtownClevelandas I knew it as a child. This was a place where we could get on a bus and spend the whole day shopping, going to the movies, and eating at the Forum.

This week another chapter is coming to an end with the closing of Volks Jewelry and the Mad Hatter Hat shop onProspect Ave.I understand change and new ideas, but now I see downtown as nothing more but a place to live, party, and of course gamble.

The Hippodrome and Embassy theaters along with all of the department stores like May Co., Higbees,Halle's, Rosenblum's, Bond's, Richmond Brother's are gone. As a landlord who has a chance to make a ton of money off a deal to bring Red the Steakhouse in the location where these stores sit, it just slices up another part of that era I grew up in.

If you remember walking downFourth Street, it was full of stores where you could buy clothes, jewelry and even corned beef sandwiches. It even had a side entrance to Woolworth's, a store we all shopped in.

With the evolution of downtown, the street is blocked off. There are nothing but places to eat and a giant bowling alley at the corner. Now let's understand… I am not hating on the new

businesses or what downtown has become. It's just hard to see something you like changed.

The younger generation will someday talk about all the great places they grew up with downtown, like the Cadillac Ranch,TowerCity, and The Corner Alley. It's hard enough just to make money to keep a door open in business, let alone get kicked out just because.

If you stay up late at night, you can see Burt Kay on television with his commercials for Volks. A business that open in 1899, has been around for over a century, I would think they could have a courtesy of finding another location before being put out on the street.

I use to work at a clothing store on Prospect called The Fly Shop owned by Don Weston, which was one of many businesses on the street fighting for a dollar.

You had Jerry Mills clothing store and next door to them, another clothing store. Now, all you have is Mr. Albert's left on Prospect and I wonder how much time they have left.

Kay has been on the news asking anybody with loans to come get them out. I know many are going to miss this place where they could run in and get money for an item and come back on payday and get it out.

I was walking pass the store the other day and felt their pain. I looked a little further down the street to see Army and Navy Goldfish store closed. Record Redenvous was another great treat. I think, back in the day, everyone went there to get 45's, LP's and yes even 8 Tracks (laughing). People also went to see Cecil Stewart with her hair fried and laid to the side.

I am sure these stores have been empty because of the high rent due to the location. But, again, it seems like with those stores being vacant, it would be an ideal location for the new business instead of evicting people.

When you hear people talk about nothing for kids to do, is this a part of the problem? As kids,

we would come downtown and enjoy ourselves or our parents would bring us to watch the Christmas displays in the windows of the department stores then eat in the Silver Grille. Not many kid friendly things to do downtown.

When a developer wants land they go after it, one way or another. And a lot of times, if you don't sell, something always seems to happen such as a fire or vandalism – something that will force you to leave the property.

InChicago, my grandparents owned a lot of property across from the stadium where the Bulls play. When they wanted to build theUnitedCenter, they helped them find a new place to stay and a tax abatement to satisfy the incontinence and paid for the property.

The new vision of developers seems to be bringing the people back to downtown areas. At one time, everyone was moving out to any suburb they could to get away from the inner city. Now people are moving back downtown and surrounding areas.

To me, all the developers buildingRandallMalland other malls forced people to shop in their area and not come downtown anymore. Now,RandallMalllooks like they are filming a horror movie there... grass not cut regularly, no activity, and RTA does not even hub there anymore.

Trends come and go and I am sure, if a new owner of the Cavaliers one day decide to move them out of downtown, a lot of those business owners will be back on television asking the question what are we going to do.

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